










Schoolyard Habitats Across Wisconsin – Sowing the Seeds of Environmental Literacy and Stewardship *A More Kids in the Woods 2008-2011 Project*

Project Description

This project is: enabling students in NW, NE, and SE WI to restore native plant habitats in and around their schoolyards through field trips and activities; providing student internships for more experience; using Interactive Television sessions for student preparation and sharing; enabling students to produce a video and book about their experiences; bringing urban and rural students together at a Student Summit; and training a team of educators to form a new Facilitating Center in NE WI with on-going support for school habitat restorations.

Individual project components:

-  Schoolyard Habitat Restorations incorporating Earth Partnership for School (EPS) interdisciplinary activities,
-  Eco-Exploration Field Trips to National Forest lands and School Forests,
-  Interactive Television programming to support activities and encourage sharing,
-  Collaborative Murals at schools in Bayfield, Crandon, Laona, Milwaukee, Wabeno, and Washburn,
-  Summer internships for students on the Lakewood-Laona Ranger District in 2008, 2009, and 2010,
-  EPS Professional Development Training for teachers and natural resource professionals,
-  An October 2011 Student Summit bringing rural and urban students together to share EPS-based inquiry projects,
-  A student-created Book/DVD telling the story of each school's native plant restorations / gardens, and
-  Creation of an EPS Facilitating Center in northeastern Wisconsin to offer on-going support.

Project Goals

By putting students in charge of their schoolyard resources, enabling them to restore native habitats, and encouraging them to teach others, this project will: 1) Promote place-based education, 2) Serve as a vehicle for people to become leaders and stewards in taking care of lands in their communities, 3) Cultivate an informed citizenry for environmental decision making, and 4) Provide long-term professional development opportunities in conservation education.

Project Partners

[USDA-FS, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest \(CNNF\), Lakewood-Laona and Washburn Ranger Districts](#)
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[Nicolet Distance Education Network \(NDEN\)](#)

[Laona School District](#)

[Wabeno School District](#)

[Arts Vitally Enrich Communities \(AVEC\)](#)

[Crandon School District](#)

[University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum Earth Partnership for Schools \(EPS\)](#)

[Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center \(NGLVC\)](#)

[Northland College Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute](#)

[Bayfield School District](#)

[Washburn School District](#)

[Milwaukee Public Schools](#)

[Urban Ecology Center](#)

[University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Project LEAF](#)

[Eastern Region \(R9\) Urban Connections Program](#)

This program, an extension of Lakewood-Laona's 2006-2007 Native Plant Program Agreements and many other activities and partnerships, is conducted under an MOU (08-MU-11091304-061) and several agreements (08-CS-11091304-062, 08-CS-11091304-063, 08-CS-11091304-064, 08-CS-11091304-065, 08-CS-11091304-067, and 08-CS-11091304-068).

Some Photos



Eco-Exploration Field Trips featured EPS activities and a chance for entire classes to explore the forest together. Left: Five of Laona's fourth graders getting hands-on experience with large woody debris

in their School Forest on 10/05/09. Right: Two of Crandon's third graders examining a Maidenhair Fern patch in their School Forest on 10/09/08.



To create schoolyard habitats with locally native plants, students collect seeds from nearby locations on the Lakewood-Laona District each



autumn and then prepare and sow those seeds in their classrooms. Left: Wabeno third graders searching the field at Knowles Creek Impoundment on 10/19/09. Right: Two Crandon fourth grade students collecting Common Evening Primrose seeds, 10/17/08.



Third (pictured) and fourth grade students took the plants they grew over winter from their classrooms and installed them in their schoolyard habitat during the second Planting Day at Laona School District's C. L. Robinson Elementary School on 05/21/10.



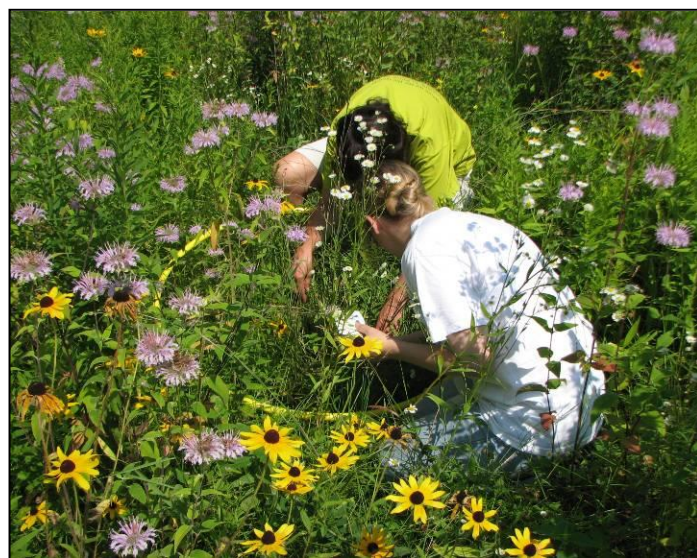
Creation of the first schoolyard habitat / native plant garden at Wabeno High School . . . Above: Students laying out the future site on the school's lawn, 11/09. Right: The 4-month-old garden on 09/22/10. Although Wabeno students painted two collaborative murals for this project on 09/25/09, plans are underway to create a field-guide-type mural (like Laona's on the next page) specifically to replace the existing, unrelated mural in these photos.



Here is the 2009 intern from Laona helping to survey for Black Terns at the Wabikon Lake colony on 08/17/09 as part of her 10-day internship on the Lakewood-Laona Ranger District. Each summer, interns spent time assisting the Wildlife, Fisheries, Botany, Timber, and Recreation programs on the District, and they could choose to job-shadow any position that interested them. Although the official internships were completed during the summers of 2008, 2009, and 2010 (with a total of 11 students participating), they were so successful that plans are being developed to have internships in 2011.



12/21/10 – Laona School District's elementary students did their mural on 10/15/10 as a field guide to hang behind their native plant garden. Plans are underway to create two more gardens at the school in 2011 (a rain garden and a garden of plants to feed birds).



NE WI Teachers gained hands-on training in cross-curricular habitat restorations during the 5-day EPS Institute at the Nicolet Distance Education Network's *Northwoods Academy*. This Institute was so successful that one will occur in 2011, and plans are being developed to hold another one in 2012. Left: Teachers using an EPS activity to examine the characteristics that unite plants into families on 08/02/10. Right: Teachers exploring plant biodiversity in the Lakewood Ranger Station's 6-year-old native plant and pollinator habitat restoration before comparing it to the diversity in the mowed lawn during the EPS activity, *What's Green and Grows All Over*, on 08/04/10.